

Small Business Strategies

Survey

Continued from Page 6

Asian business owners reported that 68% of their business came from customers in those locations; for Latinos it was 66%, and for blacks, 63%.

• The companies had deep roots. Although 30% were just 1 to 5 years old, 50% had lasted from six to 20 years, and 19% were more than 21 years old. In the Latino community, half were more than 21 years old.

• Many of the companies were started by immigrants. Among Asian business owners, 74% were immigrants; among Latinos, the figure was 43%.

• Despite optimism about the future, many businesses expressed concern about a dearth of skilled labor. Next on the list of serious ob-

stacles businesses said they faced were stiff federal and state taxes.

What the survey does not capture is movement. It is a snapshot in time of entities that are constantly evolving. Looking at it and other surveys as definitive is to miss the dynamism of small businesses.

To focus on the static percentage of home-based businesses is to miss the sole proprietor who starts a themed entertainment company in a spare bedroom and within 18 months expands to seven employees in a San Fernando office working on theme parks and attractions in Germany and Chile. Or the garage-based public relations firm that takes on partners and grows to national prominence.

To focus on the age of companies misses the 40-year-old glass company purchased by a new owner and revamped so that more than 100 employees are added, along with offices

in other states, and sales are increased to \$12 million in two years.

To focus on the small revenue is to miss the restaurant that starts with a hot plate and expands to a chain, several books and a television show for its chefs.

The small-business universe is the seedbed of all business development. Politicians who view the small-business community as diffi-

cult to tap for campaign contributions, and large corporations that perceive small firms as a less than stellar target market, will end up ignoring, snubbing or failing to provide resources for our business future. To fail to pay attention to this group of entrepreneurs is to endanger the entire business community.

The results of the Times Small-Busi-

ness Survey will be discussed in a session at the Los Angeles Times Small Business Strategies Conference, Sept. 24-25 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. For more information or to register online, phone (800) 350-3211 or go to <http://www.latimes.com/sbsc>.

Times staff writer Vicki Torres can be reached at (213) 237-6553 or at vicki.torres@latimes.com.

FREE AST Technology Consultation

An Offer This Good Only Comes Around Once Every Century!

Visit us at the Small Business Strategies Conference, Booth 509/511, and arrange for a **FREE** technology consultation.

Your future has arrived today at www.ast.com

877-AST-COM1

AST COMPUTER

How fast can we get information into a customer's hands?

Try it yourself. 1-888-FAX-4-YOU

Los Angeles Times Syndicate FAX SERVICES

1-800-LA TIMES, ext. 70750

FREE WIRELESS ADVICE. FREE WIRELESS PHONES. YOU CAN'T LOSE. YOU MIGHT WIN.

ENTER TO WIN A FREE PHONE AT AIRTOUCH BOOTH #101.

You'll get invaluable advice on wireless technology when you stop by the AirTouch booth. But that's not all. In addition to learning how AirTouch can make your business more productive, more efficient and your expenses more predictable, you can also enter a drawing to win a **FREE, state-of-the-art Qualcomm QCP™ 860 digital phone**. Drawings will be held both days, so stop by Booth #101 and ask what we can do for you. You'll find AirTouch account representatives are experts at providing timely solutions that are right for your company.

Win the NEW Qualcomm QCP™ 860 thin phone.

AIRTOUCH™

Now you can.

The QCP™ 860 and its CDMA technology have both been developed by **QUALCOMM™**.

NORTEL NETWORKS

No purchase necessary to enter drawing. ©1999 AirTouch Cellular. All rights reserved.